

THE OLDEST DATED MANUSCRIPT OF  
THE MILINDAPAÑHA

As stated by V. Trenckner in his classic though pioneering edition of the Milindapañha(Mil),<sup>1</sup> the end of the text has been lost, and the missing parts have been supplemented in the surviving manuscripts as far as they were accessible to Trenckner, from Mil 418, 21 onwards 'perhaps in Siam'. Therefore it is not without interest to have a glance at the last folios of an old manuscript of the Mil from North Thailand. This manuscript has been microfilmed at Wat Lai Hin, Amphoe Ko Kha, in 1972/4 by Dr. H. Hundius, at present University of Chiang Mai, during his research on Northern Thai literature, which has been supported by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). According to the colophon preserved on the verso of the last folio: *sakrāj dai 857 tva nai pī dap hmau Milindapañha nāy sin prahyā sāl vai kap ham piṭak dā soy lee* 'Sakarāja 857, in the year *dap hmau*, the Milindapañha has been donated by Nāy Sin Prahyā to the Dā Soy library' the manuscript is dated in CS 857, *dap hmau*, Chinese *tho* and Thai *kratāy* 'year of the hare', which corresponds to BS 2038 and AD 1495. The extraordinary high age immediately ranks this manuscript as number four, if other known dated manuscripts are compared.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is almost certainly much older than Trenckner's Sinhalese manuscript B, which he cautiously estimated to be about 400 years old, and consequently written during the late 15th century (Mil p. III). However, a more realistic date may be the 16th or even the 17th century.<sup>3</sup>

The donor, the *prahyā* Sin, who gave the manuscript to the monastic library (*ham piṭak* corresponding to modern Thai *ho trai*), is unknown, while the place name Dā Soy of unknown location<sup>4</sup> occurs more often in colophons of old manuscripts from Wat Lai Hin. Unfortunately, only about half of this valuable manuscript has survived, which, most probably consisted of 15 *phūk* (fasciculi) originally. For the last *phūk* should have been no. 16 (*ha, la*) rather, if the

number of folios necessary to cover the text is calculated, in spite of the fact that the text ends in the extant *phūk* no. 15 (*va, sa*). The *phūk* nos. 3, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14 have been lost. The following table shows the surviving parts of the text:

*phūk* 1: folios ka-kaḥ, kha-khaḥ

Begins: *namo tassa tthu. milindo nāma so rājā*, 1, 1 (photo 1)

Ends: *dutiyam pi kho sabbadi[nno]*, 30, 7 (photo 48)

*phūk* 2: folios ga-gaḥ, gha-ghaḥ

Begins: *[sabbadi]nno āha(āha ex corr.)gacchatu*, 30, 7 (photo 48)

Ends: *ānāpeti*, 57, 29 (photo 1)

*phūk* 4: folios cha-chaḥ, ja-jaḥ

Begins: *[mahārāja] pañcayojanikassa(!) macchassa*, 85 16 (photo 5!)

Ends: *kañṭhakam niha[r]e[yya]*, 112, 29 (photo 1) [om. *na*.]

*phūk* 5: folios jha-jhaḥ, ña-ñāḥ

Begins: *[niha]r[e]yya maraṇam*, 112, 29 (photo 1)

Ends: *nīpatitā yo pi mahā[rāja]*, 137, 11 (photo 48)

*phūk* 6: folios ṭa-ṭaḥ, ṭha-ṭhaḥ

Begins: *[mahā]rāja bhagavato*, 137, 11 (photo 1)

Ends: *°vibhūsanābhīrato ti ara[hati]*, 163, 25 (photo 48)

*phūk* 7: folios ḍa-ḍaḥ, ḍha-ḍhaḥ

Begins: *[ara]hati upāsako*, 163, 25 (photo 1)

Ends: *pāṇippahāre hattha[cch]e[jjam]*, 193, 17 (photo 48)

*phūk* 10: folios dha-dhaḥ, na-naḥ

Begins: *sacetanā buddhā(!)*, 247, 21 (photo 1)

Ends: *suriyo mandam tapati*, 273, 27 (photo 48)

*phūk* 11: folios pa-paḥ, pha-phaḥ

Begins: *ime kho*, 273, 27 (photo 50)

Ends: *so tassa kālo kā[le]*, 302, 2 (photo 1)

*phūk* 15: folios va-vaḥ, sa-saḥ (The pagination is mostly broken away, but still clearly readable in one or two instances).

Begins: *[o]ṇamati*, 400, 15 (photo 23)

Ends: *pūjayan ti. milindapañhā samattā paripuñṇā nīṭhitā*, 420, 22 ff. (photo 57)

Those *akṣaras* enclosed in brackets are supplemented from the preceding or succeeding folios respectively.

A marginal title has been given to the left of the text on the recto or verso of the folios khaḥ, gaḥ, etc. (not on the ka-folios): *milindapañhā nāy sin prahyā sān vai kap ham piṭak dā soy*.

On each folio there are six lines of writing. Information on the size of the manuscript, which could not be traced at Wat Lai Hin in January 1986, is not available. The serial number in the Hundius collection is no. 685 on microfilm roll no. 8. The sequence of the *phūk* on the microfilm is nos. 1, 2, 10, 7, 5, 4, 11, 6, 15, *phūk* nos. 2, 11 being photographed beginning with the end of the respective text. The remark 'photo' in the table of contents as given above refers to the page number on the microfilm.

The manuscript has been written in a clear hand and on the whole very correctly. To give an impression of the quality of the text, which is almost identical with Trenckner's edition, the first *phūk* has been compared to the printed text of the PTS edition:

1,3 *sāgalānam*; 1,8 *abbhūtā* (always -ū-); 1,11 *bhāsayitvāna*; 1,12 *°vidālaye*; 1,18 *°aṇḍālā°*; 1,19 *°parikhārā°*; 1,21 *sup-pasādītā°* (thus always); 2,2 *bhimagiri°*; 2,7 f. *°vatthābharāṇa-sampannam*; 2,10 *°siṅgādivāṇija°*; 2,11 *°rajaṭa°* (so always); 2,13 *bahunnapānam*; 2,19 om. *ti*; 2,23 *pubbayoggo*; 2,25 *paṭivasanti*; 2,27 *āvajjento*; 2,32 om. *bhikkhu*; 3,5 *paṭhamam paṭthapesi*; 3,25 *nikumbam*; 3,27 om. *rājā*; 3,28 *samantā yoga°*; 3,30 *niggahitāni*; 3,31 om. *gaṇikā*; 3,32 *yudhā chandā muttā pāvacanena ekavīsati*; 4,1 *duppāsaho*; 4,3 om. *koci*; 4,4 *addho*; 4,7 *°kāmya°*; 4,8 *senāgaṇam*; 4,13 *saṃgha-gaṇi*; 4,14 *parijāyamāno*; 4,17 *purāṇo* (so always); 4,17 *gosānelā(!)*; 4,18 *sañjāyo veddhalhapatto* (cf. Sn 92, 3 with Pj II 423, 10 foll.); 4,21 foll. *paṭivinassu ti*; 4,24 *bhadūvahanam*; 5,8 *phalavipāko*; 5,27 *kaṃ nu nv(!) ajja*; 6,7 *sotuyā*; 6,9 om. *bhikkhu*; 6,32 after *vihetṭetiti* inserted on the lower margin of the page by a second hand: *sabbe pi te bhikkhū tassa paṇhe*

vissajjetum asakkontā nagarato nikkhamitvā yena vā tena vā pakkamanti. sāgalanagaraṃ dvādasa vassāni samañebhi suññaṃ ahosi. tasmi bhagavato sāsanaṃ palutaṃ ahosi.; 6,33 om. assaguttam; 6,34 kho mahantena ketu°; 7,4–7 om. atha kho . . . °pattiyāti; 7,18 kiñci (so read here and elsewhere, e.g. Mil 122,31 with all manuscripts including this one: O. v. Hinüber: Die Grundlagen des älteren Mittelindisch. Wien 1986 §379 and addenda); 7,23 hatthatuṭṭho; 8,3 khaṇaṃ yeva; 8,7 pamujjante; 8,9 tenāvuso; 8,13 upapajjissati; 8,15 foll. om. nīharitvā; 8,22 sammā for dhammā; 8,23 abhipathanam; 8,27 abhivādanañ ca; 9,4 gaṃtvā (thus always); 9,10 hiyo (thus always); 10,4 sippāni for sippam; 10,5 om. ācariya-brāhmaṇassa; 10,2 om. ahesum; 10,15 anvayo; 11,11 koc-chapalibodho sucipalibodho kappakapalibodho: this brings the number of palibodha up to 16; 11,16 om. yathā; 11,23 dātum sa/kkhā; 12,3 santi pabbal/jissa detiti; 12,9 vijamhavat-thum: -m- ex corr.; 12,10 vijamha°; 12,21 dhammasaṅginim; 13,9 om. vitthārena; 13,11 appothesum (thus always); 13,11 dibbāni ca nānācuṇṇāni; 13,15 pubbaṇha (thus always); 13,17 upādisi; 13,23 parivitakkesi na kho; 13,27 yaṃ nūnāham; 14,18 added by the scribe of the manuscript at the bottom of the folio in front of ko nāmo: tvaṃ kiṃnāmo si ti vutto nāgaseno ti vadesi; 14,30 upajjhāyo me; 15,7 sammajjāt-thānam; 15,9 tam danta°; 15,17 tumhākaṃ assagutta; 16,5 dhammakathāya; 16,5 suññaṭṭāya paṭi°; 16,7 tasmiñ ñeva; 16,7 dhammacakkhu (thus always); 16,13 foll. nisinno dvinam(!); 16,24 kiṃ viduraṃ, -am ex corr. from -e by a second hand; 16,28 labhissāsi; 16,28 foll. vigatakālikam; 17,16 kiṃnāmo; 17,20 ābhidhammiko written twice; 17,23 yeva ca; 18,16 foll. hotu bhante ettakena pi ten' eva; 18,23 foll. himavantapabbate; 18,25 pāheṃsu; 18,32 paṇhaṃ pucchāya; 19,6 akamaṃsu (thus here only); 19,9 foll. kaṃ nu khv aji; 19,12 kaṃkha(!)paṭi-vinodetun ti; 19,17 bhaddantassa, thus only rarely; 19,30 after pabbajjā (pa is omitted by mistake in the manuscript) follows an insertion mark for devamanussānaṃ atthāya hitāya sukhāya written at the bottom of the folio by a second hand; 19,32–20,1 bhagavatā . . . pavattentena; 20,4–10 na pabbajitā/tena hi, om. puna ca . . . pabbajitā ti, at the right margin following pabbajitā by a second hand: eka yeva, and

by the same hand at the bottom on the right side of this folio pabbajito ti. It is not clear how these additions should fit into the text; 20,23 pana vo bhante; 20,23 bhikkhū(abbhokasika) nesajjikā: parentheses as in the manuscript; 20,24 panthe dūsakā; 21,13 °gaṇa° added by a second hand below the line; 21,16 pabhinnaśambhido; 21,20 durattaro; 21,21 asaṅkhob-bho; 21,24 rājamattānam; 21,24 gurukato; 21,25 °piṇḍipāta° (thus always); 21,30 ussāpento (for yajanto) dhammayāgaṃ paggaṇhanto; 21,31 °ketum ussāpento dhammasaṅkham; 22,2 °vijjuthāla°(?); 22,3 sakalaṃ lokam; 22,5 patto; 22,16 tad avasi; 22,24 foll. pucchasu ti; 22,27 om. va; 23,13 °sahassena; 23,22 koṭṭhuko; 23,28 vessavaṇṇā°; 24,4 foll. tassaṃ . . . °parisāyam; 24,7 vuddhataro; 24,17 anakkhātāñ ñeva; 24,18 milindarañño; 24,26 cittaṃ nāsakkhitan ti kathā(!) niṭṭhitā; 25,7 kiṃnāmo; 25,10 foll. om. sihaseno ti vā; 25,13 puggalo ti; 25,23 om. ko before adinnam; 25,27 phalavipākam; 26,5 kinu kho (thus frequently); 26,8 maṇṣanaḥārū; 26,8 atṭhi-mañjam; 26,11 foll. muttam matthaluṅgaṃ; 26,12–15 om. kinu . . . mahārājā ti; (26,28 unhāya: E° misprint: uñ°); 26,28 sakkharakalalavālirhākā; 26,29 rujjhanti; 27,8 pato-dayatṭhi, cf. BHS pratodayaṣṭi; 27,13 pucchanto (only once); 27,17 bhāsivā; 27,21, kalla nu; 28,12 visajjitāni nāmapaṇ-haṃ/paṭhamam niṭṭhitam. kativasso: The colophon of this chapter has been added at the right and left margins almost certainly by the scribe himself, B° (1962) vassagaṇapaṇhā dutiyā, 27,14; 28,24 om. satta; 29,1 paṭiviseso, paṭi° added below the line by a second hand, B° has vissāso, paṭivissāso, which may be a reading influenced by 29,8 vissattho, for viseso cf. Mil 94,7; 29,18 yā ca, ex corr. yāni ca by the same hand as in Mil 29,1; 29,19 atthañ; 29,20 yanunāham; 29,32 āgacchatu = B°; 30,7 saabbadi: end of phūk 1.

Letters marked as ~~rh~~ here have been cancelled by the scribe; a vertical stroke (/) has been put between two words, if the first stands at the end, and the second at the beginning of a line.

The variants given above do not include the here very occasional confusion between -t- and -ṭ- common in SE Asian manuscripts of inferior quality. The word for 'silver' *rajaṭa* is

written thus in accordance with the SE Asian Pāli orthography. The vowels *i/ī* and *u/ū* have been distinguished only rarely, a common use in Thai Pāli manuscripts. There is no visible distinction in this manuscript between *ṭh/ṭṭh* and *ḍha/ḍḍh*. Instead of the *anusvāra*, which is hardly ever marked after *-i*, the manuscript has *-hs-* regularly as in the aorists ending in *-iṃsu*, in *hāṃsa*, 24,11 etc., what has not been noted in the preceding collation. The most conspicuous, though isolated form in this context is *pāheṃsu*, 18,25, which is a BHS form alien to Pāli. There are, however, some very slight traces of Sanskritization to be observed in this particular case and very occasionally elsewhere as in *patodayaṭṭhi*, cf. *pratodayaṣṭhi*, Divyāvadāna (index) or perhaps *mañja* for *miñja* or *guru* for *garu*. The frequent *kinu*, *kalla nu*, 27,21 and first of all *yanu*, 29,20 are forms similar to those met with in Mūlasarvāstivāda texts from Gilgit.<sup>5</sup>

The ultimate origin of this manuscript seems to be Ceylon as shown by some very characteristic misreadings confusing *akṣaras* of the Sinhala alphabet: *bh/h*: *bhāsayitvāna*, 1,11 for *h°*; *bhimagiri*, 2,2 for *hima°*; *vijamhavatthum*, 12,9.10 for *-mbh-*. Further, *-ū-* and subscript *-r-* have been confused in *bhadū°*, 4,24 for *bhadra°*, and finally *ca* stands for *va* in *yāva*: *yāni ca*, 29,18.

The oldest manuscript used by Trenckner, his B, breaks off at Mil 418,10,<sup>6</sup> and most of the rest of the text has been supplemented in A from a Siamese Pāli manuscript. The wording of this supplement is the same as in his Burmese manuscript M and in the Siamese printed edition (S<sup>c</sup> 1923: BE 2466).<sup>7</sup>

Now the manuscript from Wat Lai Hin offers a slightly different end of Mil, which may be the original one. And even in this manuscript, which is based on the Sinhalese tradition as stated above, the last folio bristles with corrected miswritings. This may point to an original, in which the last folio was difficult to read because its writing was partly effaced already. Therefore it is tempting to think that this Mil manuscript from North Thailand has been copied shortly before the last two folios of the only(!?) surviving manuscript at that time in Ceylon were finally lost. On the other hand,

the manuscript from Wat Lai Hin seems to mark a dead end of the tradition, as no further trace of the end of the text as given here can be found, and as in addition to this the need was felt to compose a new end to the text as a substitute for what was lost. This new text comprises Mil 419,14 foll. only, as we can see now, that is only the last folio was really lost at a certain time in SE Asia as well, which had to be rewritten almost certainly not earlier than the 16th century, if not later. This supplement, the new end as we have it today, reads as if somebody, who still knew this passage more or less by heart, wrote down a slightly enlarged version as a substitute for the lost folio. And it is only in this late supplement that the somewhat confusing calculation of the number of questions is mentioned, which therefore seems to be a fairly recent addition to the text.<sup>8</sup>

The following text of the two 'lost' folios can be found in the manuscript from Wat Lai Hin:

418,21 *imasmi*: the *anusvāra* is not marked after *-i* throughout; 418,22 °*ālakam*; 418,23 *vaka°*; 418,28 *anattato* as M; 418,28 *rogato pey gaṇḍato*; 418,29 *ītito* as M; 418,30 *attāraṇato* against all of Trenckner's manuscripts; 418,31 *aḷenato*; 418,31 *araṇato* by mistake; 419,4–6 The text is disturbed by repetition: *imasmi kāyogāvacarena sāyapātaṃ ārammaṇe upāsitaḍḍhaṃ idaṃ mahārāja issatthassa catutthaṃ aṅgaṃ gahetabbhaṃ. bhāsitaṃ petam mahārāja yoginā yogāvacarena sāyaṃ pātaṃ ārammaṇe . . .*, M and the Wat Lai Hin manuscript have *sāyaṃ pātaṃ* throughout. The lines 3 and 4 of photo no. 55 are identical for the better part, and identical *akṣaras* have been written below each other; 419,11\* *sāyātaṃ* by mistake; 419,12\* *labhati bhattavettanaṃ*.

The text following the verses differs from the one known so far:

419,14\* foll.: . . . *adhigacchatīti. milindapañho niṭṭhito. milindapañhavyākaraṇāvasāne samuddakucchiyā nighoso viya sādhu kara/56,1/saddo + (bahu)lo ahosi. (de)vasabhā milindo/ṭṭh rājā pa* (miswritten for *ca*) *orodhagaṇā parisā ca añjalī paṇāmetvā vandisu. so nihatamānathambho*

uddhaṭṭadāṭṭho viya bhujagindo evam āha. sādhu bhante  
 nāgasena buddhavisayo pañho tayā visajjito imasmi sāsane  
 ṭhapetvā dhammadesanā(!)pati sārīṭṭh(!)/puttattheraṃ  
 añño tayā sadiso pañhāvi(ss)ajjane natthi. khamatha me  
 bhante nāgasena ma(ma) dosaṃ upāsaṃ ca maṃ dhāretha  
 ajjatagge pānupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gataṃ ti. tathā rā(jā) saha  
 balanikāyehi na(!)gasenattheraṃ pariyupāsītva milindavihāraṃ  
 nāma mahāvihāraṃ kāretvā therassa niyādetvā (ca)tūhi pac-  
 cayehi nāgasenassa koṭisahasabhikkhūhi saddhi paricaritvā  
 nāgasenassa paññāya pasīditvā puttassa rajjaṃ niyādetvā  
 agārasmā anāgāriyaṃ pabbajitvā aṭṭhahattaṃ pāpuṇi.  
 tena vuttaṃ

The concluding verse is the same as in E<sup>c</sup>. However, the following variants may be noted: 420,17\* *lokasmī katā*; 420,20 \**visesassādhāro aggasetṭho anuttaro* as in B<sup>c</sup>; 420,21\* *hitam attano* as in B<sup>c</sup> for *attham attano*; 420,22\* *paññāvantam bhipujeyya*.

The text ends: . . . *pūjīyan ti. milindapañhā samattā paripuṇṇā niṭṭhitā*.

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## Notes

- 1 A bibliography of studies on editions and translations of Mil has been collected by S. Behrsing: Beiträge zu einer Milindapañha-Bibliographie. BSOS 7. 1933–5. 335–348, 517–439, cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques 5. 1937.245; further: C. O. Blagden: A passage from the Mōn version of the Mil, in: Festschrift. Publications d'hommage offertes au P. Wilhelm Schmidt. Wien 1928. 43–50; C. A. F. Rhys Davids: The Milinda-Questions. An inquiry into its place in the history of Buddhism with a theory as to its author. London 1930; F. O. Schrader: Two unexplained names in the Mil. JRAS 1939. 606–608; K. de Vreese: Het Milindapañha. Rede uitgesproken bij de opening zijner lessen in het Pali . . . Leiden 1948; J. Gonda: Tarn's hypothesis on the origin of the Mil. Mnemosyne 4. 1949. 44–62 = Selected Studies IV. Leiden 1975. 496–514; Thich Minh Chau: Mil and Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra. A comparative study through Pāli and Chinese sources. Calcutta 1964; J. P. McDermont: Kamma in the Mil. JAOS 97. 1977. 460–468; R. N. Basu: A critical study of the Mil. A critique of Buddhist philosophy. Calcutta

1978; T. Pobozniak: The problem of dream in Mil., in: L. Sternbach Felicitation Volume Lucknow 1979[1981]. II 675–678. – The critical edition by Maung Tin: Milinda Pañhā. Rangoon 1915, which covers Mil 1,1–123. 7 used manuscript material other than Trenckner. It should have been listed in the Epilegomena to the CPD as E<sup>c</sup>(2). Mil has been retranslated by I. B. Horner: Milinda's Questions. London I 1963, II 1964. – The Samantapāsādikā quotes Mil as *mendakamilindapañhesu*, Sp 742,27 (cf. Epilegomena to the CPD 2.6 Mil), which comprises the text up to Mil 362. It may be worth while pointing out that the semi-canonical character of Mil is underlined by the statement that what has been used by Nāgasena to instruct Milinda (*rañño saññāpanattham āharitvā*) is considered as canonical, while his own ideas are not (*therassa sakapaṭibhāṇe*). A hitherto unknown modern Pāli commentary on Mil written in Burma is described by M.M. Deshpande: Introducing the Milindapañha-Aṭṭhakathā of Thaton Mingun Sayadaw, in: Amṛtadhārā. Professor R. N. Dandekar Felicitation Volume. Delhi 1984. 95–103.

- 2 Old dated Pāli manuscripts are listed JPTS 10. 1985. 3: SN (Colombo Museum) AD 1412, Spk (National Library, Bangkok) AD 1440 to which may be added now a fragmentary Ja-manuscript (Wat Lai Hin) AD 1471. A considerable number of Pāli manuscripts dating from the 16th century are preserved in this Wat.
- 3 C. E. Godakumbura: Catalogue of Ceylonese Manuscripts. Copenhagen 1980, p. 50, no. PA(Sinh.) 28. The manuscript is dated, but unfortunately the date is effaced according to Godakumbura.
- 4 According to Dr. H. Hundius, to whom I am indebted for permission to use his collection and for help in reading the colophons written in North Thai. The colophons of this collection will be published in a future issue of JPTS.
- 5 O. v. Hinüber: Die Bestimmung der Schulzugehörigkeit buddhistischer Texte nach sprachlichen Kriterien, in: Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Phil.-Hist. Klasse. Dritte Folge, Nr. 149. Göttingen 1985. 57–75, esp. p. 72
- 6 The statement by Godakumbura (see above n. 3), p. 50b: 'The final portion of a newer MS . . . ' contradicts Trenckner, Mil p. IV note 1, where it is said that only Mil 401,9–416,17 are supplemented by a more recent hand.
- 7 Contrary to this I. B. Horner, Milinda's Questions I p. XXIX states: 'Si. does not give either of these supplements'. It is not clear, to which print this refers: no year is quoted on p. LVII s.v. 'Si.'.
- 8 On the confusion of figures: I. B. Horner (see n. 7) I p. XXX.